

What is claimed is:

1. A method for operating an internal combustion engine (10), having the steps:
 - setting the torque output of the internal combustion engine (10) via a power actuator (18; 28; 30) as a function of the signal of a driver's command sender (24);
 - forming a value for a maximum admissible torque of the internal combustion engine (10);
 - forming a dimension figure for the actual torque of the internal combustion engine (10) and comparing the dimension figure to the value; and
 - triggering an error response if the actual torque exceeds the maximum admissible torque;
 wherein an intervention of a fault regulator (52) is superimposed on an activating signal of the power actuator (18; 28; 30);
 - the value for the maximum admissible torque is formed from a linking of a first approximation value to an estimated value for the torque contribution of the intervention of the fault regulator (52), the first approximation value being formed as a function of the signal of the driver's command sender (24).
2. The method as recited in Claim 1,
 - wherein the fault regulator (52) has a D2T2 component having operating point-dependent parameters.
3. The method as recited in Claim 2,
 - wherein, during the formation of the value for the maximum admissible torque, the estimated value for the torque contribution of the intervention of the fault regulator (52) includes a emulating the D2T2 component using fixed parameters.
4. The method as recited in at least one of Claims 1 through 3,
 - wherein, during the formation of the value for the admissible torque, the actual controlled variable output by the power actuator (18; 28; 30) is taken into consideration.
5. The method as recited in Claim 4,

wherein the actual controlled variable output by the power actuator (18; 28; 30) is taken into consideration by an extremal value selection (80) in comparison to an emulated controlled variable.

6. The method as recited in Claim 5, wherein the result of the extremal value selection (80) according to Claim 5 is compared to a fixed value by an extremal value selection (82).

7. The method as recited in Claim, wherein the estimated value for the torque contribution of the intervention of the fault regulator (52) is formed by access to a characteristics curve addressed using the second derivative of the rotary speed of the internal combustion engine (10) with respect to time.

8. The method as recited by one of the preceding claims, wherein an error response without waiting time is able to be triggered during a transition into an overrun condition of the internal combustion engine (10).

9. A control unit (20) for controlling an internal combustion engine (10), wherein it controls at least one of the methods as recited in Claims 1 through 8.

10. The use of a control unit (20) for controlling an internal combustion engine (10), wherein it controls at least one of the methods as recited in Claims 1 through 8; as power actuator (18; 28; 30), at least one of the following components being used: a system of fuel injectors (18), a throttle actuator (28) in connection with the throttle valve (26), a variable intake valve control (14, 30), an ignition system.